

A N *M.W.* 8
APPENDIX R3

TO THE *Scripture Doctrine*

Rev'd Mr. WESLEY's

Scripture Doctrine

CONCERNING

PREDESTINATION, &c.

O R

ELECTION CONDITIONAL.

Great is Diana of the Ephesians! Acts xix. 34



L O N D O N:

Printed in the Year, M.D.CC.LVI.

[Price One Penny.]



ELECTION Conditional.



1. **U**NCONDITIONAL Election makes the infinitely just and good Being so unreasonably *partial*, that it ought never to be received but upon the clearest *Proof*, and undeniable *Testimony*. Doubtful Texts (I mean those whose Meaning *seems* doubtful) are by no means sufficient to establish a Point of this Importance : Especially if the Interpretation given of these Texts contradicts other and more plain *Passages*: And much less are they sufficient when the Interpretation of them evidently contradicts the whole *Scope* and *Tenor* of Scripture.

2. In this Case, a Man *ought* (supposing it would bear no other Explanation) rather to *reject* a particular Text, than to give way to the horrid Notion, that the *Spirit of God* could dictate *Contradictions*. And the rather still, when the *main* of what is generally supposed to be his *Dictation* must be deemed *false*, in order to make *Way* for a *small Part*, which is supposed to be *unquestionable Verity*.

3. As to the Predestinarians saying, they can “reconcile unconditional Election to all Parts of Scripture ;” it is a notorious *Mistake*. They may *quibble* and *quirk* and *eat out* every Text in the Bible by forced *Comments* ; (tho’ perhaps they will not be able to reconcile *one Part* of their *own Scheme* with *another*, much less with the divine *Attributes* :) but they can never reconcile *absolute Election* with the *present Bible*. Indeed, if we will give them leave to *cut* and *mangle* and *translate* as they *please*, they may, for ought I know, make *something* or *nothing* of it before they have *done*. But if we take the Bible as it lies, they can no more (upon their *Hypothesis*) make it consistent with itself, than the Words and Actions of a Man stark Mad, can be proved consistent with *Reason* and sound *Sense*.

4. Two Things we ought to require in every Theological Tenet before we assent to it—That it be *scriptural* and *rational*. If it be *unscriptural* (inconsistent with the *Tenor* of Scripture) we ought at all Hazards to *reject* it ; and if it be *irrational* (contrary to *unbiased Reason*) it is *certain* it *cannot* be *true*. I do not mean that there are no Things in Scripture that are *above* or *superior* to our present *rational Powers*, or that these are not true in *themselves* ; but if any Tenet can be proved to be contrary to *right Reason*, or which comes to the same, to the whole Scope and *Tenor* of Scripture (which is a precious *Transcript* of divine, unerring Reason) it is evident the Tenet itself is *false*.

5. Let us examine unconditional Election by these two Marks *only*, and see if it be not both *irrational* and *unscriptural*.

First, Let us see if unconditional Election be not highly *irrational*.

1st, What can be more irreconcilable to Reason, than that all Men being *equally fallen* by the Fault of *another*, God should *unconditionally elect some to everlasting Life*, leaving the *others* only a bare *Possibility of Salvation*? Or decree *irresistably* to save some, leaving the *others* to the *Freedom of their own Choice*? Indeed, had some sinned *more*, some *less*, in their *own Persons*, there had been some Reason for a *Difference*; but as it is, all the Men in the World, can never divest such an *Election of Unreasonableness*.

2dly. Is it not *inconsistent with infinite Goodness*? Goodness infinite must *equally regard the whole*, and every *Individual Member*; but to chuse by Caprice is rather to be *creaturely Partial* than *infinitely Good*. To be infinitely Good to *some only*, is *not to be good to others*.

3dly. Is it not *inconsistent with infinite Justice*? To chuse some *unconditionally*, and then to act *irresistably* upon them, is to chuse *partially*, and then to destroy Man's *Freedom of Choice*, * which surely is not the most consistent with Justice, as it is *dragging Men to Heaven like Stocks and Stones*! It also renders it impossible to *reward Men according to their Works*, Rev xxii. 12. since if these Men have no Power to *nill Good*, there is no room to reward them for chusing what they could not avoid.

* Mat. xxii. 3. xxiii. 37. John v. 40. Heb. xii. 25.

Infinite Justice admits of no Partiality or Deviation : But unconditional Election implies Deviation and Partiality : Therefore unconditional Election is inconsistent with infinite Justice.

6. Secondly, Let us see, if unconditional Election is not altogether unscriptural.

1st, If it be not contrary to positive Assertion, Mat. xviii. 11. *The Son of Man is come to save (equally) that which is lost.* John i. 29. *Bebold the Lamb of God which taketh away the Sin of the World.* Ch. iii. 17. *God sent his Son into the World that the World (every Person equally) thro' him might be saved.* Ch. xii. 47. *I came not (now) to judge the World, but to save the World.* 2 Cor. v. 14. *We thus judge, that one died for all.* 1 Tim. ii. 6. *Christ Jesus, who gave himself a Ransom for all.* Heb. ii. 9. *That he might taste Death for every Man.* 1 Tim. ii. 4. *God willeth (equally) all Men to be saved.* 2 Pet. iii. 9. *The Lord is willing that all should come to Repentance.* 1 John ii. 2. *He is the Propitiation for the Sin of the World.*

7. If Christ had not died *equally* for *all*; and God not been equally *willing* that *all* should be saved; there had been some *Restriction* or *Limitation* in these positive Assertions: But as there is *no* *Restriction*, it is plain, Christ died *equally* for *all*, and God is equally *willing* that *all* should be saved: For God is no *Respeeter* of Persons, Acts x. 34. There is no *Respect* of Persons with him. 1 Pet. i. 17. And be that respecteth Persons commits Sin, James ii. 9. But if Partiality is a Sin in a *Creature*, would it be less so in the *Creator*?

8. 2dly. If it be not contrary to the whole *Tenor of the Gospel*. Its *Invitations* are general. Its *Commands* general. Its *Conditions* general. Its *Cautions* general. Its *Threatnings* general. And even after Men have *believed*, its *Cautions against falling away* are general. There is not the least *Hint* of some being *unconditionally favoured above others*. Therefore the *Salvation of the WHOLE is conditional*, or the *Salvation of no one INDIVIDUAL is*. Either there is *no God*, or he is *equally (antecedently) good to all*. To make him *partial*, is to *destroy his Being*. He either does not *exist*, or he is infinitely *perfect*.

9. Not that I would assert, that *GOD affords all Men equal Light, or Opportunities of knowing the Truth ; or equal temporal Advantages*. No : Nor is the Thing to be expected. *GOD has his Times and Seasons, for working his great Works upon the Earth*. And *one Dispensation makes Way for another*. Sometimes his *Presence* is more visibly displayed in *one*, sometimes in *another Kingdom*. He has also his *chosen or peculiar People* ; one while of *this Nation*, another of *that*. The *Jews, Descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and beloved for the Fathers Sake*. Rom. xi. 28, were elected to peculiar *outward Privileges*. They had also the *Law and the Prophets* : But this Difference is plain. No one that reads the *Scriptures* can possibly avoid seeing it. And if unconditional Election to eternal Life was true, it would be as manifestly visible in the *New Testament*, as the Difference between *Jews and Gentiles* is in the *Old*. Yet notwithstanding

these Advantages of the *Israelites*, they were so far from being unconditionally elected to *Salvation*, that the far greater Part of those that came out of *Egypt* with *Moses*, and of those in the Days of our *Saviour*, perished in their *Sins*. *Heb.* iii. 11. *So I sware in my Wrath, They shall not enter into my Rest.* That is, into *Heaven*, of which *Canaan* was only a *Type*, *Ch.* iv. 2. *For unto us bath the Gospel been preached, as well as unto them; but the Word heard did not profit them, not being mixt with Faith in those that heard.* *John viii. 24. Ye shall die in your Sins.* And the greater Part did, and perished by the *Roman Sword*. And the believing *Gentiles* were elected, or chosen God's peculiar *People*, in the Room of the unbelieving *Israelites*. *Acts xiii. 46. Then Paul and Barnabas said, it was necessary, that the Word of God should first be spoken to you: But seeing you put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting Life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.*

10. But tho' all Men have not equal Light, and Opportunities of knowing the Truth, &c. yetall have an *Offer of Salvation* (either with or without the Written Word) and a *Power of accepting* held out to them. For Christ is the *Light that lighteth every Man that cometh into the World,* *John i. 9.* And, in every Nation, he that feareth God, and worketh Righteousness, is accepted of him, *Acts x. 35.*

And altho' GOD has his *Times and Seasons* for shewing *Mercy*, yet they are all consistent with the highest Degree of *Impartiality* and infinite *Justice*. He always saves Men consistently with his own *Attributes*, and that *Freedom of*

Choice which is unalienable from reasonable Creatures. He chuses none partially, that is unconditionally. Mark xvi. 16. *He that BELIEVETH, and is baptised, shall be saved; but he that believeth NOT, shall be damned.* John iii. 36. *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting Life: And he that believeth NOT the Son, shall not see Life, but the WRATH of God ABIDETH on him.* And he saves none irresistably, or by Force. Luke ix. 23. *If any Man WILL come after me, let him deny himself.* Ch. vii. 30. *The Pharisees and Lawyers made void the Council of God AGAINST THEMSELVES.* Ch. xiii. 34, *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy Children, and YE WOULD not.* John v. 40, *And ye WILL NOT come unto me, that ye may have Life.* Ch. vii. 17, *If any Man WILL DO his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine whether it be of God.* Acts xiii. 46, *YE put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal Life.*

12. Besides, these Consequences necessarily follow unconditional Election: 1st. The Elect were in Christ before they existed, contrary to Rom. iv. 17. *I have made thee a Father of many Nations before God, who quickeneth the Dead, and calleth those Things that be NOT as tho' they WERE.* Ch. ix. 25, *As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my People that were NOT my People; and her Beloved, which was NOT beloved.* Eph. ii. 13, *But ye who sometimes were FAR OFF, are NOW made NIGH by the Blood of Christ.* 2 Thess. ii. 13, *God hath from the Beginning chosen you to Salvation thro' SANCTIFICATION of the SPIRIT, and BE-*

LIEF of the TRUTH. And 1 Pet. i. 2, Elect thro' SANCTIFICATION of the SPIRIT unto OBEDIENCE. 2dly. They were justified before they believed ; contrary to Mark xvi. 16. *He that BELIEVETH shall be saved, but he that believeth NOT shall be damned.* John iii. 18, *He that BELIEVETH is not condemned : but he that believeth NOT, is condemned already.* Rom. iii. 26, 28, *That he might be just, and the justifier of him that BELIEVETH in Jesus.* Therefore we conclude, that a Man is justified by FAITH, without the Deeds of the Law. Ch. ix. 31, 32, *But Israel hath not attained to the Law of Righteousness. Because they sought it not by FAITH.* Gal. ii. 16, *Knowing that a Man is not justified by the Works of the Law, but by the FAITH of Jesus Christ.* And Ch. iii. 24, 26, *Wherfore the Law was our Schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by FAITH.* For ye are all the Children of God by FAITH in Christ Jesus. 3dly. And lastly, They are Children of God while doing the Works of the Devil : contrary to John viii. 44, *Ye are of your Father the DEVIL, and the LUSTS of your Father ye will do.* Rom. vi. 16, 20, *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves Servants to OBEY, his Servants ye ARE whom ye obey ; whether of Sin unto Death, or of Obedience unto Righteousness ?* For when ye were the Servants of SIN ye were FREE from Righteousness. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, *Know ye not that the Unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God : Neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor Abusers of them-*

themselves with Mankind, nor Thieves, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners? Gal. vi. 7, 8, *Be not deceived, God is not mocked: For whatever a Man soweth, that shall be also reap. For he that soweth to the Flesh, shall of the Flesh reap Corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap Life everlasting.* And 1 John iii. 8, 9, *He that committeth SIN is of the DEVIL: For this Purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the WORKS of the Devil. Who-soever is born of God doth not COMMIT Sin.*

These Consequences are not wrung out, they undeniably follow from the Premisses. Therefore, if unconditional Election is true, Belzebub is God of Heaven, or the Judge of all the Earth is unjust. For this manifestly exhibits such a Picture of the Supreme Being as is irreconcilable to Justice, Mercy, and Truth. Neither can Believers themselves have any solid Assurance of being happy with such a Deity; since the same Being that chuses partially, and acts irresistably, may after all his Promises, arbitrarily damn the very Elect: The one is no more inconsistent with infinite Rectitude than the other.

13. Upon the whole, I would ask every calm and considerate Espouser of this Tenet, these few Questions. 1st. Is it in the Bible? 2dly. Is it consistent with a State of Probation? 3dly. May not some insuperable Objections be brought from Scripture against it? 4thly. Is it not of dangerous Consequence? Will not many dead, formal, fallen Professors flatter themselves that they are of the elect Number? 5thly.

5thly. Does it not imply an *Impossibility* of a Person ever falling into *Sin*, after he has once believed; as it necessarily includes *irresistable Grace*? Or, if not, does it not lay the *Blame* of his *Sin* upon *GOD*? 6thly. Can it be reconciled with the divine *Perfections*? Lastly, Does it not make the *Bible* a mere jumble of *contradictory Assertions*?

14. Scriptural Election is, 1st. *He that believeth shall be saved, from the Guilt and Power of Sin.* Rom. v. 1, *Being justified by FAITH, we have PEACE with God.* Ch. vi. 14, *For Sin shall not have DOMINION over over you: For ye are not under the Law, but under GRACE.* 1 John iii. 9, 10, *Whosoever is born of God doth not COMMIT SIN.* And *whosoever doth not RIGHTEOUSNESS is NOT of God.* 2dly. *He that endureth to the END, the same shall be saved eternally.* Mat. x. 22. Also Ch. xxiv. 13. Mark xiii. 13. Heb. iii. 6, 14, *Whose House are we, if we hold fast the Confidence, and the Rejoicing of Hope firm to the END. For we are made Partakers of Christ, if we hold the Beginning of our Confidence stedfast unto the END.* Ch. vi. 11, 12, *And we desire that every one of you do shew the same Diligence, to the full Assurance of Hope unto the END. That ye be not slothful, but Followers of them, who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promises.* 1 Pet. i. 9, 13, *Receiving the END of your Faith, the Salvation of your Souls. Wherefore gird up the Loins of your*

your Minds, be sober, and hope to the END, for the Grace that is to be brought unto you at the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Rev. ii. 10, 26, Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my Works unto the END, to him will I give Power over the Nations.

15. The Elect are, in a loose Sense, the Christians : All Believers. Mat. xxiv. 22, But for the Elects Sake those Days shall be shortened. Tit. i. 1, Paul an Apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the Faith of God's Elect, and the acknowledging of the Truth, which is after Godliness. 1 Pet. i. 2, Elect according to the Foreknowledge of God the Father, through Sanctification of the Spirit unto Obedience. In a more strict Sense, Those who continue to walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit, Rom. viii. 2, 33. Those who are conformed to the Image of Christ, Ver. 29. The Faithful, Mat. x. 22. Ch. xxiv. 13. Mark xiii. 13. Rev. ii. 10, 26.

F I N I S.

